
NEWS From:

Reps. Honda and Lofgren



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**Reps. Honda and Lofgren Demand a Fair Process for Immigrants
Caught in a Corrupt INS Green Card Scam**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22, 2003 — Today, U.S. Representatives Mike Honda (D – San Jose) and Zoe Lofgren (D-San Jose) sent a letter to Attorney General John Ashcroft demanding that the 275 Korean immigrants, who may have been victims of a corrupt former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) official, be given fair, case-by-case reviews before any deportation proceedings begin. According to an admitted corrupt INS official, he and rogue immigration brokers fraudulently authorized “official” green cards for 275 Korean immigrants. The INS is now seeking to deport these Korean immigrants, seemingly without taking into consideration the role of the INS itself in the scam. The 275 cases were processed through the San Jose, Calif. office of the INS.

Attached is the complete text of the letter:

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

We write to you today to bring an urgent matter to your attention. Without your immediate involvement, scores of immigrants may be deported without an opportunity to prove their innocence in a fraudulent scheme orchestrated by a corrupt Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) official and four unscrupulous immigration consultants.

The *San Jose Mercury News* and the *Los Angeles Times* have recently published a series of articles about one of the largest “green card” fraud schemes in California history (see clips enclosed). Over a twelve year period, the *Mercury News* reported that a long-time INS supervisor accepted over a half million dollars in bribes from immigration consultants, in exchange for “green cards” he later authorized. In exchange for cooperation in prosecuting the four immigration consultants, the corrupt INS supervisor paid a fine and received probation. In 1999, the four immigration consultants were convicted for their participation in this scam that affected up to 275 Korean immigrants.

As a result of this fraudulent scheme conducted by an INS official and immigration consultants, hundreds of Korean immigrants are facing uncertainty, deportation hearings, and undue anxiety after building their lives in California over the past two decades. Many of these immigrants are successful Bay Area professionals, leading well-established lives, ranging from doctors and architects to high-tech engineers. They have detrimentally relied upon their “green cards” to build their lives in our communities and have become examples of the American dream.

Amid this controversy are the voices of the Korean immigrants facing deportation. According to news reports, they claim they had no knowledge of the fraudulent scheme orchestrated by the immigration consultants and the INS official. The immigrants say they presented authentic documentation and properly filled out all relevant immigration forms assuming they would legitimately receive a valid and legal “green card.” These documents were subsequently and illegally destroyed by the corrupt INS supervisor. Moreover, it has been reported that government prosecutors, and at least one of the convicted consultants, have admitted that the immigrants were unaware of the scam.

In light of these reports of innocence and the fact that these immigrants have detrimentally relied upon the acts of a corrupt government official, it is incumbent that the burden be placed upon the government to prove actual fraud by the immigrant before deportation occurs. Without such a process, we will be unfairly deporting immigrants, who claim they are innocent, based solely upon the actions of a greedy and corrupt INS supervisor and convicted immigration consultants.

We are not asking for blanket amnesty for these individuals; rather, we ask you to use your discretionary power to assure a fair process of review for each of the 275 cases reportedly involved with this scheme. Each individual should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the government should have the burden to show that there was actual fraud committed on the part of the immigrant before deportation occurs. Finally, until a fair process is created for this unique situation, we ask that you suspend removal proceedings for the affected individuals.

We greatly appreciate your immediate attention to this very urgent matter and look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Mike Honda, M.C.
Zoe Lofgren, M.C.

Enclosures